

REMARKS

This is intended as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated November 23, 2004, having a shortened statutory period for response set to expire on February 23, 2005. No new matter has been added. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the pending claims for reasons presented below.

Double Patenting Rejection

Claims 1-10 stand rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 9 and 10 of U.S. Patent No. 6,655,459. In response, Applicant submits that the terminal disclaimer filed herewith overcomes the rejection. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the claims.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 11-14, 17, 19 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Bissonnette* (U.S. Patent No. 4,669,541). In response, Applicant canceled these claims without prejudice and traverses the rejection as it might be applied to new claims 21-30.

Bissonnette discloses a stage collar having a housing central portion (reference character 12c in the figures) placed in a casing string (C) using connectors (12a and 12b) so that the stage collar is located above a weak zone. Since a tubular string has two ends which only occur at the terminal tubular members, this locates the stage collar in *Bissonnette* away from an end of the casing string as illustrated in the figures (e.g., Figure 5A) where there are seen lengths of casing emphasized by break lines both above and below the stage collar. Therefore, *Bissonnette* fails to teach, show or suggest a tubular housing disposed at an end of a tubular string and having an enlarged inner diameter section at an end thereof proximate the end of the tubular string, as recited in claim 21 and claims 22-30 dependent thereon. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that these claims are allowable and requests allowance of the same.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 15, 16 and 18 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. In response, Applicant canceled these claims without prejudice, thereby obviating the objection.

Conclusion

The references cited by the Examiner, alone or in combination, do not teach, show, or suggest the invention as claimed. Having addressed all issues set out in the Office Action, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully requests that the claims be allowed.

Respectfully submitted,



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